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95-272

September 6, 1995

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EIU CONCLUDES CENTENNIAL WITH TIME CAPSULE CEREMONY

CHARLESTON -- *Tuesday, May 27, 1896. The city was "gaily bedecked" and the "largest crowd that ever gathered in Charleston on any occasion was assembled there to witness the ceremonies of laying the cornerstone of the Eastern Illinois Normal School (sic). The "gaily bedecked city" welcomed hundreds of people including then Governor J.P. Altgeld, General C.C. Hilton and a number of other distinguished guests and their wives.*

The 1 p.m. ceremony began with a procession moving west on Monroe Street and concluded with a formal program on the normal school grounds. The ceremony was conducted by Grand Master Owen Scott of Bloomington and the Grand Masonic Lodge A.F. and A.M."

The *Mattoon Commercial* reported the exciting events of that day almost 100 years ago in its June 4, 1896 issue.

Nearly 100 years later, Eastern Illinois University will conclude its year-long Centennial celebration with a public ceremony commemorating the laying of the

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TIME CAPSULE

original cornerstone at 4 p.m. today at the front entrance of Old Main, which will be decorated in red, white and blue bunting.

Gov. Jim Edgar, an Eastern alumnus, is among the distinguished platform party guests, who will give brief remarks and accept his "Centennial 100" pin from EIU President David Jorns.

The ceremony, to be held rain or shine, includes the removal of the original cornerstone and the opening of its time capsule. The contents of the original time capsule will be available for viewing following the ceremony and later placed on display in Booth Library for a limited time. A new time capsule will be sealed to be opened in the next 100 years.

Limited parking will be available in Lot X east of Old Main, behind the African-American Cultural Center. Shuttle bus service from O'Brien Stadium to Old Main will be provided by the Charleston Masonic Lodge.

Sept. 7 is an important date in Eastern's history, since it was on that day in 1895 when local residents received word that the State Legislature approved the City of Charleston as the future home of the Eastern Illinois State Normal School.

In keeping with tradition, today's ceremony will be performed by the Masons, represented by John Loudon, grand master of the Grand Lodge of Illinois A.F. and A.M., and Jon Cole, worshipful master of the Charleston Masonic Lodge #35. In October, the local lodge will mark its 150th anniversary.

On the occasion of the original cornerstone ceremony for Old Main, Grand

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TIME CAPSULE

Master Owen Scott delivered an oration to some 500 Masons and guests in attendance.

He said of the institution then being built, "Her name will ever after be coupled with holy ambition, innocent childhood, rugged manhood, beautiful womanhood and a royal statehood. Within her gates will come the stately tread of any army, not bent on carnage and pillage, but one to war on ignorance and vice, to destroy the sting of idleness and the venom of malice."

During today's ceremony, the Masons will present the timecapsule to be placed in the cornerstone and read a list of its contents. They will then test the stone to assure that it has been properly placed and place upon it the "elements of consecration" -- corn, wine and oil. The corn is an emblem of plenty. The wine represents joy and gladness. The oil is an emblem of peace.

Others participating in the ceremony are Charleston Mayor Dan Coughill, Mattoon Mayor Wanda Ferguson, Board of Governors Universities Vice Chairman Mack Hollowell, University Archivist Bob Hillman, Centennial Class President Jacqueline Urquhart and Student Body Vice President for Public Affairs Jason Anselment. Matthew Piescinski, a 1979 EIU graduate, is the master of ceremonies.

Music will be provided by the EIU and Charleston High School bands.

A reunion for graduates of the Teachers College High School will coincide with the ceremony.

The contents of the original time capsule will be placed on display in the (. . .) They include: Copy of proceedings of Grand Lodge A.F. and A.M for 1895; list of graduating class of Charleston High School 1896; List of member and officers of the Thirty-ninth general assembly and governor and staff officers; a list of officers of the city of Charleston with actions pertaining to Normal school; list of membership and officers of Charleston Lodge, No. 35, A.F. and A.M., with date of organization; Copy of invitation and program of ceremonies at laying of cornerstone; set of coins, including a 2,000 year old Roman coin, silver coins and a gold dollar; copies of Charleston Weekly Courier, Charleston Daily Courier, Charleston Daily News, Charleston Scimitar, and the Charleston semi-weekly Plaindealer; Eastern Illinois Normal School badge; and a number of cards from distinguished individuals.